

REMARKS

In the originally filed patent application, claims 1-14 were presented for examination. In the Office Action of October 1, 2003, claims 1-14 were restricted as follows: group I (claims 1-6); group II (claim 8-10); and group III (claims 11-14). In the response to the restriction requirement on November 24, 2003, Applicants elected with traverse group II and submitted new claims 15-26. In the present Office Action, the Examiner withdrew from consideration claims 1-7 and 11-14. Applicants have cancelled claims 1-7 and 11-14 herein. Accordingly, claims 8-10 and 15-26 are presently pending in the application. Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of the pending claims in view of the following statements and/or amendments to the claims.

Claims 8-10 and 15-26 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, the second paragraph. Applicants have amended independent claims 8, 15, 21, 26 to include the words "partially cured." Applicants have also amended claims 25 and 26 to indicate that an electromagnetic field heats the end caps. Accordingly, applicants submit that these rejections are now moot.

Claims 8-10, 15, and 21-26 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) based on Bilski et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,698,059) in view of Bras et al. (FR 2416041A).

Independent claim 8 is directed to a method of forming a filter cartridge, including among other limitations, "automatically placing a pair of metal end caps, having an adhesive therein, on opposite ends of said filter element at substantially a first time using said end cap application station; transferring the filter element to an inductive heating station; and heating the end caps by inductive heating, thereby partially curing said adhesive in said pair of metal end caps to bond said pair of metal end caps to opposing ends of said filter element." Independent claims 15 and 26 contain similar limitations.

Referring to Bras et al., the reference is directed to a method for manufacturing filters. Bras et al., however, does not provide any teaching of automatically placing a pair of metal end caps, having an adhesive thereon, on opposite sides of a filter element at substantially the same time using an end cap application station, as recited in independent claims 8, 15, and 26, as amended. Further, Bras et al. does not provide any teaching of a mechanism for simultaneously applying two end caps on a cartridge.

Accordingly, because the combination of Bilski et al. and Bras et al. does not teach or suggest all of the limitations of independent claims 8, 15, 26, and claims 9-10, 21-25 that depend from at least one of claims 8, 15, applicants submit that the claims are allowable.

Claims 15-20 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) based on Sakaida et al. (U.S. Patent No. 4,795,524) in view of Bras et al.

Independent claim 15 is directed to a method of forming a filter cartridge, including among other limitations, "automatically placing said pair of metal end caps on opposite ends of said filter element at substantially a first time using said end cap application station; automatically transferring the filter element to an inductive heating station; and heating said pair of end caps by inductive heating to partially cure said adhesive, wherein said pair of end caps are bonded to said filter element."

Referring to Sakaida et al., the reference is directed to a filter and method for manufacturing filters. Sakaida et al., however, does not provide any teaching of automatically placing said pair of metal end caps on opposite ends of said filter element at substantially a first time using an end cap application station, as recited in independent claim 15, as amended. Bras et al. also fails to teach this limitation. Further, Sakaida et

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al. does not provide any teaching of automatically transferring the filter element to an inductive heating station using a transfer device, as recited in claim 15. Bras et al. also fails to teach this limitation.

Accordingly, because the combination of Sakaida et al. and Bras et al. does not teach or suggest all of the limitations of independent claim 15, as amended, and claims 16-20 which depend from claim 15, applicants submit that claims 15-20 are allowable.

If for any reason the Examiner feels that consultation with applicants' attorney would be helpful in the advancement of the prosecution, he is invited to call the telephone number below for an interview.

If there are any charges due with respect to this Amendment or otherwise, please charge them to Deposit Account No. 06-1130.

Respectfully submitted,

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